Criticism Strains AFL-CIO Merger

Reuther Attacks Meany Over Boycott Of World Labor Unit Headed by Red

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By Stephen S. Rosenfeld
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In a move straining the 11-year merger of American labor, United Auto Workers President Walter P. Reuther yesterday attacked AFL-CIO President George Meany on his international policy.

Saying it was "unwise, undemocratic, contrary to AFL-CIO policy and unauthorized," Reuther condemned the action of the AFL-CIO delegation to the International Labor Organization conference in Geneva in walking out after a Communist was elected president.

Reuther, front-ranking candidate to succeed Meany as head of organized American labor, made his challenge in a letter unanimously sanctioned by the UAW's Executive Board, which ended a two-day meeting yesterday in Detroit. A copy of the letter became available here.

The 71-year-old Meany was not available for comment yesterday.

The 13-million-member AFL-CIO came close to splitting as recently as four years ago over temperamental, political and philosophical differences between Meany and Reuther. But recently Reuther had seemed to mellow his pursuit of non-bread-and-butter causes and Meany had freshened his interest in Great Society goals. The apparent result was a political detente.

A labor source last night

See UAW, A15, Col. 1

Associated Press

WALTER REUTHER
. . . berates Meany

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Reuther Raps Meany Over ILO Boycott

played down Reuther's revolt. "The ILO is not much of an issue," he said. "This is one more in a series of strongly brewed tempests in a teapot. Meany and Reuther have found a way to get along in the continental United States—in domestic affairs—but from time to time they blow up in foreign affairs. At some point someone will bring them back together again."

Reuther's brother and aide, Victor, last month strongly attacked Meany's "secretary of state," cold warrior Jay Lovestone, and Walter Reuther yesterday continued in that vein on the issue of the ILO boycott.

The autonomous labor delegation walked out on the new Communist president of the ILO in order to implement a traditional AFL-CIO stand on non-recognition of Communist unions. Efforts of the embarrassed Johnson Administration to get the delegation to return have so far failed.

"It is a gross disservice to democracy," Reuther told "dear George," for delegates to walk out "merely because the result of an election—about which no question of impropriety has been raised—is not to their taste. This is precisely the kind of action for which American labor has in the past justifiably condemned Communists."

"We yield to no one in our opposition to Communist tyranny. We are fully aware that, in the absence of democracy, so-called unions in the Communist countries are not free.

"But we share the view that the cause of human freedom will be advanced, not by isolating ourselves from the hundreds of millions of people now under Communist domination, but rather by promoting relations with them that will enable us to demonstrate the superior value of democratic institutions."